

Churches W
St. George

St. George Church Denies Newspaper Coverage Of Religious Services

S APR 7 1981

St. George Eastern Orthodox Church is participating in a news boycott against the Tribune-Star Publishing Company by not allowing the newspapers to write about special easter services later this month because of protests from some parishiners who are members of the Terre Haute Newspaper Guild.

St. George Eastern Orthodox Church is the only orthodox church in the immediate area, and since orthodox Easter celebrations are both interesting and colorful, both papers had scheduled special coverage weeks in advance through the church pastor, Father Daniel Rohan.

When contacted about the photography sessions Monday, Rohan informed Tribune-Star reporters that the coverage had been discussed at

a meeting of the church's governing board. Rohan said that at the meeting, Charles J. Maloof, a striking Tribune-Star employee and a Newspaper Guild officer, protested the churches plans to be included in a special Inview Magazine feature on Easter services.

City Council President Raymond Azar, who refused to comment on city business to a Tribune-Star reporter following last Thursday's city council meeting, attended the board meeting. In a telephone conversation with the STAR Monday evening, Azar confirmed that he attended the meeting "as a parishioner."

"C.J. Maloof was the one protesting, though," Azar said. "They asked me my opinion and I said to them what I told you (a Star reporter) the

other night. I didn't say anything more than what they could have read in the newspaper for themselves," Azar added.

After making the above comments, Azar asked if they would appear in the newspaper and when told that they would, he stated that he wouldn't have talked about the meeting if the knew a reporter was intending to use the information for a news story.

Maloof was unable to be contacted by telephone Monday evening for comment.

The Terre Haute Newspaper Guild has mailed several letters to churches, schools, government agencies and others asking them not to allow coverage by the newspapers.

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Community Affairs File

Local church is drawn into paper strike issue

By PATRICIA KRAPESH
Tribune Staff Writer

The casualty list of victims in connection with the strike by local unions against the Tribune-Star Publishing Co. grows daily.

Reports today were that a local church was participating in a news boycott against the newspaper. The pastor of St. George Eastern Orthodox Church cancelled arrangements made weeks earlier for special coverage related to the local orthodox Easter celebration.

The cancellation was related to the strike. But the pastor claims his actions were not motivated by wanting to take sides in the dispute between the newspaper and its unions.

Father Daniel Rohan's actions apparently were motivated out of concern for a parishioner — a parishioner who happens to be a member of the Terre Haute Newspaper Guild.

Guild member Charles J. Maloof, a Tribune reporter, said that in the past he has functioned as a liaison of sorts between the newspaper and the church.

Regarding the special coverage planned for the Easter celebration, Maloof told a Tribune reporter today, "I just wanted to explain to him

(Father Rohan) my position." Maloof said he wanted Father Rohan to know that "he would be talking to someone who would be replacing me at this time."

Maloof apparently addressed a meeting of the church board. The striking worker said that Father Rohan "asked the board to make a decision when I was there." But, according to Maloof, the decision was deferred to the pastor.

Meanwhile Father Rohan's actions have been interpreted in news reports as a boycott against the papers.

"I, as the pastor, seeing the delicacy of the situation, felt it best at this time not to place anything in the paper. The board, I and the board, in no way intended to boycott the newspaper. This was not the intent."

"I, as the pastor, felt it good for the church community as a whole to wait and see what happened with the general situation and then later — continue placing articles in the newspaper as St. George's has in the past," Father Rohan explained.

"I'm very sad about what has happened with the situation. It has been blown out of proportion and could cause a lot of damage to the parish," the pastor said.

Father Rohan described his parish of 90 families with about 200 people as

T APR 7 1981

a "close-knit group of people."

"Because of the love that I have... and the closeness that I have with the parishioners, I would support one person or many of the parish for the good of the Christian fellowship that we have to our Lord and master Jesus Christ," Father Rohan explained.

While Maloof commented, "If I knew it was going to hurt him (Father Rohan) and the church, I wouldn't have said anything in the first place."

He added, "I wasn't telling him what to do. He was unaware of the situation involving one of his parishioners, mainly me."

The church did not receive a letter from the Guild requesting that they not release news information to the papers, according to Father Rohan.

Tribune-Star general manager John Schweitzer, reacting to the latest development, said, "If it's degenerated to the level where they're now pressuring religious leaders and others — it's sunk to a new low."

He added, "The dispute should be settled at the bargaining table."

Meanwhile, workers have been "on the street" for more than six weeks.

The stakes are high — more than 100 people claim rights to their "former" jobs, while the newspaper company claims rights to continue to publish "with or without the unions."

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St. George

St. George's (T.H.)
Newspaper (T.H.)

Churches (T.H.)